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High-level segment

Provisional summary record of the 15th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 1 July 2008, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Mérorès ..... (Haiti)

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Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development

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Promoting an integrated approach to rural development in developing countries for poverty eradication and sustainable development, taking into account current challenges

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

High-level segment:

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Promoting an integrated approach to rural development in developing countries for poverty eradication and sustainable development, taking into account current challenges

General debate for the high-level session (E/2008/10, E/2008/11, E/2008/15, E/2008/33, E/2008/50, E/2008/56, E/2008/57, E/2008/68, E/2008/69, E/2008/70, E/2008/75, E/2008/78, E/2008/79, E/2008/81, E/2008/85, E/2008/86 and E/2008/88; E/2008/NGO/1, E/2008/NGO/2, E/2008/NGO/3, E/2008/NGO/4, E/2008/NGO/5, E/2008/NGO/6, E/2008/NGO/7, E/2008/NGO/9, E/2008/NGO/10, E/2008/NGO/11, E/2008/NGO/12, E/2008/NGO/13, E/2008/NGO/14, E/2008/NGO/15, E/2008/NGO/16, E/2008/NGO/17, E/2008/NGO/18 and E/2008/NGO/19; E/2008/CRP.2 and E/2008/CRP.3)

Statement by the President

1. **The President** said that for the first time, the Council had taken on two new functions: the Annual Ministerial Reviews and the Development Cooperation Forum. Sustainable development was vital in order to confront the challenges facing the planet. A round table on the topic would therefore be organized on 2 July 2008, with a focus on the conservation of ecosystems. The topic of the thematic debate was also timely, since it would allow discussion both of the implementation of the Council's ministerial declaration of 2003 and of new challenges such as the food crisis. Two further round tables on 3 July 2008 would tackle biofuels and ways to harness rising food prices for poverty eradication and sustainable development. The first Development Cooperation Forum, had thus far been highly valuable and would undoubtedly influence decisions in other international forums, including the upcoming Accra High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness and Doha Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development.

2. One of his main goals during his time as President of the Council, had been to involve all stakeholders in the Council's work. He hoped that the Civil Society Development Forum and the Innovation Fair had helped further that aim. He hoped that the national voluntary presentations had also reinforced the national focus of the Council's work, that the general debate would foster multilateral collective action and that the Council could become the forum for dialogue that had been envisaged at the World Summit.

Statement by the Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs

3. **Mr. Stelzer** (Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, Department of Economic and Social Affairs) introduced two reports of the Secretary-General on the Annual Ministerial Review: implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development (E/2008/12) and the theme of the 2008 high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council: Promoting an integrated approach to rural development in developing countries for poverty eradication and sustainable development, taking into account current changes (E/2008/68), respectively.

4. The first report made five key points. First, it was essential to integrate the three pillars of sustainable development into national planning and policymaking. Second, governments could not meet the challenges without the participation of civil society, local authorities, the private sector and the general public. Third, fundamental changes in consumption patterns would be required in order to combat climate change — the key challenge of the current era — and it would be difficult to explain the reasons for those changes to the general public. Fourth, attention should be paid to fighting environmental deterioration, which took forms such as loss of forest cover, loss of biodiversity and desertification. Fifth, greater efforts were needed to promote technology transfer on a concessional and preferential basis, particularly energy and resource-efficient modern technologies and affordable and renewable energy systems.

5. Turning to the second report, he noted that some of the challenges identified by the 2003 ministerial declaration had persisted, while the economic downturn and the food crisis had created additional problems. The latter would require urgent aid to protect

the most vulnerable, combined with medium and long-term programmes to promote sustainable development and improve agricultural productivity.

Statement by the Chairman of the Committee for Development Policy

6. **Mr. Ffrench-Davis** (Chairman, Committee for Development Policy), introducing the part of the report on the tenth session of the Committee (E/2008/33) dealing with the achievement of the internationally agreed goals on sustainable development said that the severe challenge posed by climate change to development had by now been generally accepted. The Committee's report looked at the key channels through which climate change could affect development and the ways of protecting against its impact, namely, through adaptation and mitigation policies, effective international cooperation and improved policy coherence. Climate change must be addressed as an integral part of the wider sustainable development agenda and required a transition to less carbon-intensive economies and the enhancement of adaptive capacities in developing countries in a way that increased their options. Deep overall reductions in carbon emissions according to the principle of equal but differentiated responsibilities, and a comprehensive approach beyond the cap-and-trade system, would be required.

7. After touching on the three main policy approaches to dealing with mitigation in general and with outcomes harmful to the environment in particular, he noted that, given the urgency of the challenge and the shortcomings of each of those approaches, alternative action to complement them must be funded. Reduction targets needed to be regionally differentiated and negotiated in the context of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. In the developing countries, emission cuts posed a major challenge. Transition strategies to redirect investments to greater energy efficiency and renewable energy alternatives were urgently needed to ensure that those countries did not pursue a fossil-fuel-dependent path; to that end, the developing countries would need significant financial support, technology transfer and capacity-building from the developed economies.

8. Adaptation to climate change must be integrated into such development strategies and policies as rural development, disaster risk management and infrastructure investment. Developed countries needed to ensure that various international policies that affected sustainable development in poor countries reinforced each other. The least developed and small island developing countries were the most vulnerable to the threats of climate change and had the least capacity to adapt to them. International cooperation on the basis of the Bali Action Plan, was the only possible route.

9. The Committee for Development Policy hoped that its recommendations — including the recommendation to review the adequacy of resources required for sustainable development — would help the Council to find a way to practical solutions and policies.

10. **Mr. Stratan** (Moldova) welcomed the Council's new mandate, the introduction of national voluntary presentations and the recommendations of the Secretary-General's report. There was an urgent need to help developing countries and countries with economies in transition to expand agriculture and increase investment in rural development. Drought during the previous year coupled with market distortions had eroded farmers' incomes. Soaring food and energy prices could further dampen economic growth. Moldova implemented, under the United Nations "Relief and Technical Assistance Response to the Drought in Moldova" project, a Sustainable Agricultural Development Strategy developed in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

11. At the national level, Moldova's implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was framed by the Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction Paper and by the National Development Programme, a paper defining objectives to be attained by 2011. Midway to the target year of 2015, it seemed unlikely that Moldova would achieve the MDGs, including the crucial goal of poverty reduction. Moldova had found that because the eight goals were closely interlinked, a more coherent development agenda was required. International support and development assistance, particularly stable and predictable financing and enhanced access to international trade, would also be critical.

12. **Ms. Argueta** (El Salvador) said that her country supported the Council's new mandate and remained committed to achieving its development goals.

El Salvador had enacted significant macroeconomic reforms, opened up its economy and implemented various programmes as part of an ambitious agenda to combat poverty and related social problems. The measures taken by her Government were designed, inter alia, to protect the most vulnerable groups, promote economic growth and access to food while maintaining macroeconomic and political stability. However, El Salvador would require sustained international cooperation and assistance to implement that vision. The two recent Special international Conferences on Development Cooperation with Middle-Income Countries held in Spain and in El Salvador, respectively, were a step in the right direction.

13. Welcoming the Doha Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development, she noted that, while considerable progress had been made in reducing poverty and hunger, considerable challenges remained before the MDGs could be achieved. Indeed, the pressing topics under discussion, including food security, climate change and migratory flows, required a comprehensive and innovative solution with input from all stakeholders. These and other topics had been discussed at the Summit of Central American Heads of State, which had deplored the European Union's recent directive on immigration and called for a special session of General Assembly on rising fuel prices.

14. **Mr. Shahid** (Maldives) said that despite development challenges, the Maldives had achieved the highest per capita GDP in South Asia over the past 20 years, and was on course to achieve all the MDGs. While environmental sustainability and gender equality remained as key challenges, the Maldives had been graduated from least developed country status. Those achievements had been built upon an integrated development strategy, the latest stage of which envisioned a sustainable development path anchored in economic growth, social equity poverty eradication, environmental protection and good governance. One of the core aims of that strategy was balanced regional development based on the principles of population development consolidation and safer islands.

15. All those hard-won achievements notwithstanding, the Maldives and other small island States, were grappling with their greatest challenge — climate change — which threatened their development and indeed their very existence, despite their minuscule contribution to it. Indeed, the inverse relationship between responsibility for climate change and vulnerability to its consequences was often overlooked. In response to the injustice of that situation, a declaration by the Maldives that all peoples had a fundamental and universal right to live in a safe, secure and sustainable environment had motivated a call for a new paradigm of "sustainable and just development". A resolution, proposed by the Maldives and calling on the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to explore the relationship between climate change and fundamental human rights, had been adopted by the Human Rights Council. The Maldives hoped that increased dialogue on and support for the concept of sustainable and just development would result in international action to mitigate the worst effects of climate change.

16. The support of the international community for poverty eradication and sustainable development should not be restricted to providing aid and assistance, but should also involve a commitment to avoid undermining the ability of other States to pursue sustainable long-term development. Efforts to reach agreement on an effective and equitable successor to the Kyoto Protocol should be redoubled, because it was only through such commitment and multilateral solidarity that sustainable and just development could be guaranteed for the Maldives and other developing countries.

17. **Mr. Orellana Mercado** (Honduras), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Central American Integration System (SICA) as well as Brazil, expressed alarm at the economic and social consequences of the high price of oil, including its impact on food prices worldwide. In May 2008, the heads of State and Government of SICA and Brazil had issued a statement underscoring the need for the United Nations to examine the economic crisis caused by the high price of hydrocarbons and its consequences, and had expressed concern at the speculative nature of the rise in oil prices, which was having a negative impact on the poorest developing countries, and which threatened the advances they had made towards achieving the MDGs in recent years.

18. The General Assembly should convene a special emergency session to discuss the causes behind soaring oil and energy costs and propose practical ways to restore stability to energy markets, including through the establishment of a standing mechanism designed to prevent such crises in the future. The production and

sustainable use of ethanol and biodiesel must be compatible with national, regional and global food security policies, as well as with the search for alternative sources of renewable energy. There was an urgent need to develop alternative sources of energy and to collectively increase food production while safeguarding natural resources. FAO was to be congratulated for holding a High-Level Conference on World Food Security: the Challenges of Climate Change, in Rome.

19. Finally, noting that migration was a human right, he expressed serious concern regarding new migration policies that were not conducive to finding solutions to the grave problems facing the world. The Central American Integration System urged a successful conclusion to the Doha Round of trade negotiations, and underscored the need to eliminate trade-distorting agricultural subsidies, especially subsidies for producers in developed countries, once and for all.

20. **Mr. Zaichenko** (Belarus) said that countries were not benefiting equally from globalization. The expansion of unilateral trade and coercive measures threatened the international trade system and prevented countries from achieving the MDGs. His country's economic policy was based on sustainable development, social development and environmental protection. Belarus had achieved a high GDP growth rate over the past five years despite unfavourable trends in some areas, including in the energy market. It was implementing special programmes to improve demographic patterns and address social and economic problems in the regions, small- and middle-sized towns and rural areas; recent positive economic trends augured well for the achievement of the MDGs.

21. He called for effective and coordinated efforts at the national, regional and global levels to address the food crisis, and for the interests of all members of the international community to be taken into account in the development of alternative energy sources. Rising energy prices also posed a great challenge to meeting the MDGs, and the United Nations should ensure that technology for energy security was made available to all. He called for a General Assembly debate on energy efficiency and new and renewable sources of energy during its sixty-third session. It was also necessary to provide a legal framework for the management of carbon emissions.

22. **Ms. Quintana** (Chile) said her country had achieved greater sustainable development and economic growth by combining global economic and social policies with sectoral policies for specific vulnerable groups. Economic growth averaged 5.4 per cent from 1990 to 2007, accompanied by significant increases in social spending, which represented 12 per cent of GDP in 2007, while poverty levels dropped from 38.6 per cent in 1990 to 13.7 per cent in 2007. Nor were rural areas excluded from the benefits of development, with the percentage of the rural population in poverty (12.3 per cent) falling below that of the urban population for the first time in 2006. Macroeconomic stability, trade liberalization and strengthened social and agricultural policies had played a role in those achievements.

23. Referring to a recent Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) study showing that the country had a robust and dynamic agricultural sector, she noted that Chile's agriculture and food-producing sectors represented an opportunity for innovation and entrepreneurship, especially in the context of globalization. In that regard, addressing rising food prices, which threatened to deepen poverty, required working simultaneously on several fronts, starting with United Nations efforts to generate a fast international response. Chile supported the work of FAO and the World Food Programme (WPF), as well as an increase in funds for humanitarian operations required by the most vulnerable countries.

24. There was also a need to make progress in global action to tackle climate change on the basis of common but differentiated responsibilities. Chile believed in globalization but saw a need to manage it better. Multilateralism played a fundamental role in ensuring equity in international relations, whereby least developed countries could benefit from the fruits of global economic progress. Chile was willing to share its experience in areas where it had been successful, but also called for greater commitment on the part of the developed world in favour of the countries most affected by the crisis. Increased development was imperative, but it must be harmonious, sustainable and provide opportunity for future generations.

25. **Mr. Michel** (Belgium) said that rising food prices and climate change were two development priorities for Belgium. The food crisis affected developed countries, directly threatening progress towards the achievement of the MDGs. It perfectly illustrated the need for an integrated approach to sustainable

development and achieving the MDGs. In the interest of food security, agriculture should be reassigned top priority in sustainable development. To that end, donor countries should aim to devote 10 per cent of their ODA to agricultural development by 2010. Local purchases which currently accounted for only 19 per cent of global food aid, should also be increased.

26. Urgent action was also required on climate change. While the poorest countries were the least responsible for that global phenomenon, they were the hardest hit by its effects inter alia on biodiversity, soil degradation, food security and public health. Climate change also had a direct impact on the sustainability of development cooperation projects; a World Bank study found that 55 per cent of its projects were climate-sensitive and that a quarter of them were high at risk of being negatively affected by climate change, yet only 2 per cent of its projects had been tested for climate sensitivity. Only joint global action could deal with urgent global challenges such as the food crisis, climate change and dwindling natural resources; only total and sincere political will to be proactive would ensure success.

27. **Mr. Osman** (Egypt) said that his country attached importance to strengthening the Council in order to achieve economic and social progress as well as environmental protection. Achieving the MDGs required the global community to work swiftly towards implementing the commitments of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, among others. Many of the issues raised at the Second Preparatory Meeting of the Development Cooperation Forum in January 2008, which Egypt had hosted, including aid effectiveness and the quantity and quality of funding, had been reaffirmed during the opening of the Forum.

28. Poverty eradication remained the most important challenge, particularly in Africa. At the same time there was a global food crisis sparked, inter alia, by climate change, agricultural subsidy policies and increased biofuel production. That global problem called for joint international efforts in a framework of cooperation that took into account the priorities of developing countries. In that context, Egypt welcomed the recent High-Level Conference on World Food Security, held in Rome, as well as the efforts of the Secretary-General to coordinate an international response to the crisis. There was an urgent need for food and energy importers and exporters to cooperate in drawing up an international strategy in that regard.

29. There was also an urgent need to develop a comprehensive approach to sustainable agriculture, and for the international community to support developing-country capacities. Successful experiences should be shared, particularly in the area of providing access to basic social services, in addition to supporting increased investment in the agricultural sector in developing countries.

30. The efforts of developing countries to eradicate poverty required an enabling international environment, including increased ODA, comprehensive external debt-relief initiatives and a comprehensive overhaul of the concessional loan process with a view to including middle-income countries. In his view, an agreement was required to address the imbalance in the international trading system. Egypt attached great importance to effective partnership and cooperation in implementing sustainable development goals.

31. **Ms. Al-Balooshi** (Bahrain) summarized the conclusions of the Economic and Social Council Preparatory Meeting on Sustainable Urbanization held in Bahrain on 1 and 2 June 2008. The meeting, which had been attended by a number of international agencies, NGOs, private-sector organizations and experts, had covered topics such as urban infrastructure, environmentally friendly urban architecture, sustainable development and technology transfer.

32. The meeting had recommended, inter alia, that the local population and all stakeholders — including governments, municipalities, representatives of civil society and NGOs — should be consulted at every stage of urban planning; there should be more government investment in urban development and that Islamic banks could be involved in funding such projects; and that governments should provide clean drinking water to disadvantaged areas and shanty-towns, while taking action to develop more sustainable consumption patterns. Capacity-building for management and decision making was also encouraged. Public-private partnerships, it was suggested, would help develop technologies to mitigate climate change. Lastly, it was important for governments to foster environmentally friendly architecture.

33. **Mr. Lowe** (Barbados) observed that the current turbulent economic environment jeopardized the development gains of the developing countries and

widened already existing disparities. Barbados and its neighbours from the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), with small, open economies highly vulnerable to external shocks, had been affected by the global economic slowdown as well as the global food and energy crises, all of which were beyond their control. As small island developing States, they had a special need for international policies that focused on building their resilience in order to safeguard their sustainable development.

34. His Government's energy policy sought to promote energy conservation and efficiency and the increased use of renewable energy sources such as solar energy. The Government was also ensuring that neither those living in poverty nor the productive sectors would bear the full brunt of energy cost increases.

35. Regionally, rising food prices had led the CARICOM governments to lift tariffs on a number of basic commodities so as to reduce the impact on the poor; and common measures were planned to improve conditions in the agricultural sector. While Barbados itself was working on a new food security policy that would ensure self-sufficiency, and was taking steps to liberalize various sectors as a correction to the market, collective international action on the food crisis was urgently needed.

36. The threat of global climate change, however, represented the most serious environmental and developmental challenge confronting small island developing States and other developing countries. Barbados had adopted national and regional climate-change adaptation strategies, but such plans would be meaningless in the absence of decisive global action. The future of humanity hung in the balance. The welcome Bali Action Plan had initiated a negotiating process to craft a political response. All Member States must engage constructively and in good faith to achieve a comprehensive outcome at the 2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen. Global problems required global solutions; and effective multilateralism must ensure a greater policymaking voice for developing countries.

37. **Mr. Danenov** (Kazakhstan) observed that governments, the United Nations system, regional organizations, development banks, the private sector, the scientific community and non-governmental organizations must join in a common endeavour to deal with the causes of the food crisis. Member States should demonstrate the necessary political will and flexibility to establish a new trade regime that promoted food production and agricultural investment in the developing economies, and must complete the Doha Round of trade talks. The international financial institutions must work effectively, and any programmes promoting biofuels should be carefully reviewed to prevent them from undermining food security.

38. Kazakhstan itself had been affected by the rise in food prices, and the Government was doing what was needed to meet the internal demand for staple foods and curb the price increases. It was also strengthening agricultural production under a plan to develop agro-industry through the year 2010. The agricultural sector in Kazakhstan was very productive, making it a major grain supplier to the world and a provider of food aid to countries in need, and it had an enormous potential for still greater production given further investment and the introduction of advanced technologies and scientific breakthroughs.

39. Kazakhstan had taken a number of steps to achieve sustainable development. It had adopted a 2007-2024 plan for Kazakhstan's transition to sustainable development, establishing a framework for economic growth and environmental protection and devising specific indicators to measure progress. In order to ensure inter-sectoral and inter-agency coordination, a Council on Sustainable Development had been established under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister. Kazakhstan had adopted an environmental code in keeping with the best international practices and, for the first time, relevant environmental principles of sustainable development had been legislated, including the regulation of greenhouse-gas emissions. Having assumed obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Kazakhstan had managed, despite industrial growth, to decrease its domestic carbon use and industrial emissions by half since 1992; and the intention was to decrease carbon emissions by two thirds and drastically increase the proportion of alternative energy sources used.

40. Access to clean drinking water was a global priority and the adoption of a United Nations convention on the subject would establish a legal basis for providing people with drinking water. Currently, three quarters of Kazakhstan's population had such access, after considerable budgetary funding, but

problems of efficient water use and waste-water management were still acute. A Euro-Asian Water Centre had been established in his country to deal with water-management technologies and environmental problems in the basins of the region. Thus far, however, rational land use remained a major issue.

41. Kazakhstan was working actively to organize a conference with governments from the Asia-Pacific region on the environment and sustainable development in 2010, and a Pan-European ministerial conference on the environment in 2011; there Kazakhstan would put forward the idea of integrating European and Asian processes on the environment and sustainable development, with common goals and strategies within a single Eurasian continent. Political will was the key to implementing the recommendations that had come out of the various forums recently held to find a way out of the prevailing situation.

42. **Mr. Yakovenko** (Russian Federation) observed that the events of recent months had highlighted the obstacles to the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, and also the complex interrelations of the economic, social and environmental components of sustainable development. To address and reverse dangerous trends such as the unfolding food crisis or the ongoing global financial instability, all must conserve natural resources, use resources more efficiently, shift to less resource-intensive lifestyles and improve agricultural productivity. The United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development, as the main body overseeing the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, would in 2009 be adopting important policy recommendations in the areas of agriculture, rural development, land resources, drought and desertification.

43. To ensure food security, the Russian Federation had been comprehensively developing its own agricultural production and increasing its food exports, thus for the first time in many years becoming a major world supplier of agricultural products. In the context of the food crisis, the diversion of agricultural resources to produce biofuels was a problematic issue that would be resolved only by observing the principles of sustainable development and switching to second-generation technologies which used non-food products for the production of biofuels.

44. Only greater energy efficiency and a more efficient use of resources would allow the attainment of the development goals and successfully counter global climate change. The Russian Federation, committed to such a policy, had recently decided to reduce the country's total energy consumption by at least 40 per cent by 2020 relative to 2007. That would be achieved through an energy package designed to enhance the environmental efficiency of the electrical energy and other sectors, and to provide economic incentives for the transition to energy-efficient and environmentally friendly technologies, fund projects to develop both the technologies and renewable energy resources, and impose heavier penalties for violations of environmental regulations. His delegation generally endorsed the Secretary-General's assessments in his report on the issues before the high-level segment (E/2008/12) and supported his recommendations.

45. **Ms. Songco** (Philippines) said that fostering agriculture and rural development was a crucial component of her Government's anti-poverty programme. While the incidence of poverty had declined in the past six years, there was a real danger that such gains might not be sustainable in the light of recent global developments. Investment in the rural infrastructure was insufficient; the global supply of agricultural products had diminished; the cost of food was rising; agricultural production was increasingly being diverted to produce biofuels; and higher oil prices were affecting the cost of agricultural inputs. The Government's immediate response to those new challenges had been to ensure a sufficient and affordable supply of rice and other basic food commodities and other agricultural products in Government-established outlets and to monitor the activities of traders to prevent hoarding and price manipulation.

46. The Philippine approach to reviving the rural economy was two-pronged: programmes had been established for agrarian reform, urban land reform and ancestral domain reform, and in the agricultural sector reforms were focusing on increased productivity and infrastructure support. Over the next three years, spending would be channelled towards job-creation and poverty-reduction programmes. Essential agricultural support services had also been earmarked for funding; and a comprehensive infrastructure programme was expected to improve the rural investment climate — and hence market access for

farmers — substantially. A plan had been adopted that envisaged full self-sufficiency in locally grown rice by 2010. In addition, there were social assistance programmes to help rural populations escape poverty by encouraging income-generating activities and self-employment. Recent assessments had indicated that the Government's social assistance programmes had achieved only mixed results and needed to be better funded and targeted and to offer better incentives. The Government was working to remedy those shortcomings, but was aware that the fight against poverty not only required an integrated approach to rural development but depended also in large part on the timeliness with which the needs of the poor were met.

47. **Mr. Ludwing Jaentschke** (Nicaragua) said that it was encouraging to ascertain, as the Council's debate progressed, that no Government was alone in grappling with conditionalities, with problems of effectiveness and development, and with the inability to take proper control of the development of its own people. The bureaucracy of development aid made it impossible to change direction quickly and, in Nicaragua, that meant that agricultural resources could not be channelled rapidly to new priorities and new actors in the effort to raise the living standard of the country's peasants.

48. Over 250 million people in the world had to be guaranteed the basic food they needed, as a matter of human rights. Any proposals made by the Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis established by the Secretary-General must be approved by the Council and the General Assembly before they were implemented. The real cause of the food crisis resided in structural shortcomings of the current international economic order and in world trade policies that ran counter to the agricultural sustainability of the developing countries, and those would require radical changes. A group of Latin American and Caribbean States had met to propose long-range steps and benchmarks under a joint initiative for food security and sovereign control of food.

49. The development of the countries of the South depended on an immediate recognition of their right to ownership of their own development; of the need to move to a new development paradigm in which development aid would serve to buttress the profound transformations taking place in Southern societies; the need for both North and South to accept their mutual responsibilities for sustainable development; the fact that national policies were the exclusive competence of the country concerned and should not be subject to conditionalities; the need for increased financing for agriculture and rural development, focusing on the determining role of rural women; and the need to give priority to using agricultural products for food rather than for the production of biofuels.

50. Mr. Makayat-Safouesse (Congo) said it was clear that the development priorities established by the international community had not been met. Indeed, his delegation was deeply concerned by the uncertain outlook for the world economy, which had run into major difficulties following several years of strong growth. Although some progress towards the MDGs had been made in most countries, the majority of sub-Saharan African countries were continuing to struggle to meet their internationally agreed goals and the achievement level for most Millennium Development Goals Indicators remained below expectations. The international community needed to redouble its efforts to ensure that the current economic and financial turmoil did not wipe out the limited economic progress achieved to date in many countries.

51. The current Council session should focus attention on the urgent need for improved international governance and a renewed commitment to coordinated action in order to achieve sustainable development, particularly at the mid-way point between the adoption of the MDGs and their target date. Together with the Doha Review Conference, it provided an opportunity to reflect on the challenges still to be met.

52. His Government was working to implement the key priorities of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper drawn up in close consultation with all stakeholders. As a result, significant progress had been achieved in the areas of economic growth, inflation reduction and accumulation of foreign reserves between 2004 and 2006, allowing the Congo to reach the decision point for debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative.

53. In the area of agriculture, the Government had recently adopted a National Food Security Programme to address the combined effects of structural weaknesses and the food crisis by strengthening production capacity at all levels. The country's efforts to achieve integrated rural development also included an emergency agricultural programme for 2008-2009. The Congo would, however, need the support of the

international community to implement the various programmes.

54. The Secretary-General had stressed the need for more financial, technical and administrative resources to be channelled to developing countries and it was a matter of concern that the problem of insufficient funding remained unresolved. He therefore hoped that the Development Cooperation Forum would play a key role in advancing the global partnership for financing for development.

55. **Ms. Gonzalez** (Observer for the Dominican Republic) said that awareness of the current crisis in all its various forms — economic, financial, social, ecological and potentially even governmental — was at the heart of her Government's development agenda. While Dominican Republic was ready to do everything that the current circumstances required, it was concerned by the lack of solidarity and cooperation by some members of the international community. Spiralling oil price rises could potentially jeopardize all development initiatives, including the achievement of the MDGs. Indeed, rising oil and food prices were making people poorer in her country.

56. The situation was made worse by speculative activity on the world energy market. In that respect, the President of the Dominican Republic had called for the creation of two solidarity funds, so that the financial surpluses generated could be used to help the most vulnerable countries cope with the consequences of higher oil and food prices. The Dominican Republic had also created a Food Security Council to develop and implement policies that would ensure sufficient production of good-quality, affordable food.

57. The current crisis must not be allowed to undermine governance. Instead, it was to be hoped that it would spur the international community to take action to meet its sustainable development commitments. History showed that extraordinary changes benefiting entire peoples had often been preceded by violent upheavals, and she hoped that globalization would turn out to be as beneficial for all.

58. **Mr. Hunte** (Observer for Antigua and Barbuda), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that at a time when the international community was confronted by multiple interrelated and mutually reinforcing crises, as well as a number of fundamental structural challenges — including persistent widespread poverty — and the world was increasingly looking to the United Nations for leadership in tackling them, it was vital for the annual ministerial review and the Development Cooperation Forum to show themselves able to make bold new recommendations based on factual evidence and to systematically monitor their implementation.

59. With regard to the theme for the 2008 annual ministerial review, the Council should methodically review progress on the implementation of various agreements and commitments, assess the constraints to implementation and give direction to facilitate action. Information presented at the 2008 annual ministerial review gave cause for concern in that regard, showing that the developed countries had failed to implement measures to mitigate adverse climate change and that the implementation of most of the MDGs was behind schedule.

60. The Development Cooperation Forum should draw attention to the fact that national development strategies and domestic resources were not sufficient for developing countries to achieve sustainable development, particularly integrated rural development. They also needed a conducive and facilitative international economic policy environment, but that had been lacking.

61. Recognizing the Council's efforts that year to address emerging issues and involve a wide cross section of stakeholders, he made a number of recommendations to advance and institutionalize the process. At the current session, the Council should explicitly recognize the impact of the continuing lack of coherence in global macroeconomic and trade policies on the achievement of global and national goals. It should promote greater coherence, including by calling for the elimination of market-distorting measures by developed countries. It should put itself in a position to pronounce on the performance of countries and international institutions in meeting their engagements, urge developed countries to meet their longstanding ODA commitments and call on Member States to address all issues related to achievement of the MDGs, in accordance with the pillars of sustainable development. In the current extraordinary times, extraordinary responses were required from the international community.

62. **Mr. Ripert** (France), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey,

the stabilization and association process country and potential candidate, Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition Armenia, Georgia and Moldova, said that the theme of the debate — "implementing sustainable development" — was more of a challenge than ever for the international community in the current uncertain economic environment.

63. Environmental degradation weakened growth prospects, widened inequalities and caused the poorest people to fall even further into poverty. It would therefore be impossible to achieve sustainable development without finding effective responses to the problems threatening the planet, of which climate change was one of the greatest. The European Union was still determined to secure a global agreement at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in 2009. It had already unilaterally undertaken to cut its greenhouse gas emissions by 20 per cent by 2020 and was ready to do more if other parties made comparable efforts. The transition to a low-carbon economy would require a wide range of different tools and could not be achieved without the mobilization of the private sector.

64. The European Union had taken sustainable development — one of its fundamental objectives — into account in developing its own internal policies and was determined to strengthen its partnerships with developing countries. It had reaffirmed its commitment to achieve a collective ODA target of 0.56 per cent gross national income by 2010 and 0.7 per cent GNI by 2015; that commitment should see annual European Union ODA double to over 66 billion euros. Half of that collective increase would be allocated to Africa. In that regard, he referred to the European Union Agenda for Action on MDGs.

65. The European Union stressed the need to improve the quality and efficiency of development aid. It was also important for the Council to play a strengthened role in the follow-up of sustainable development commitments. The Development Cooperation Forum and the annual ministerial review would make a positive contribution in that regard.

66. **Mr. Hill** (Observer for Australia), speaking on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand (CANZ), said that the focus of the 2008 annual ministerial review was highly pertinent since progress towards achieving sustainable development goals had been mixed. With climate change clearly one of the key issues on the international political agenda, the CANZ delegations welcomed the Secretary-General's commitment to the Bali Action Plan and would continue to play a key role in negotiations on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

67. The launch of the Development Cooperation Forum was also particularly significant in a year when the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus was to be reviewed. The report of the Secretary-General submitted for the consideration of that Forum had tended to focus on the negative aspects of the progress achieved to date towards the MDGs. While the CANZ delegations accepted that more needed to be done, it was important also to recognize some of the successes. Record levels of economic growth had been achieved in much of the developing world since 2002, with some countries making significant progress in reducing poverty.

68. Some of those gains would, however, be compromised if new challenges such as food insecurity were not quickly tackled. The CANZ delegations were particularly concerned by the crisis facing vulnerable households and food import-dependent least developed countries. Since the rises in food prices had multiple and complex drivers, strategic, coordinated and, where possible, tailored responses were crucial, guided at the macro level by the draft United Nations comprehensive framework for action and the World Bank's New Deal for Global Food Policy. It was important to address the root causes of food insecurity as well as its short-term impact, and that would involve boosting agricultural productivity and research, reducing vulnerability and liberalizing international trade in food and agricultural products. The CANZ Governments would work bilaterally, regionally and multilaterally, and in concert with the Secretary-General's High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Crisis, to achieve those objectives.

69. The eradication of poverty, achievement of gender equality and environmental sustainability were key areas of focus for the CANZ delegations in their development assistance efforts, which were driven by the premise that sustainable and broad-based economic growth, underpinned by stable and effective government, was crucial to achieving poverty reduction.

70. **Mr. Lidén** (Sweden) said that the sustainable use of natural resources and caring for the environment

were crucial to equitable and sustainable global development. It was the responsibility of the community of nations to manage the world's environmental, economic and social resources in a manner that would enable future generations to enjoy a high quality of life. Currently, the most significant obstacle to that development was climate change.

71. Noting that the majority of the world's poor living in rural areas were dependent on local biological diversity and ecosystems and had to cope with the impact of environmental degradation and climate change, he said that the link between climate change, ecosystem resilience and human resilience needed to be better understood.

72. In that connection, his Government had addressed long-term sustainability issues in its national policies and in the framework of the European Union Sustainable Development Strategy. It had also elaborated a policy for global development aimed at supporting Sweden's partner countries in meeting their specific needs and at promoting synergies between different policy areas.

73. It was imperative to find a global solution to climate change. Although developing countries had the right to improve their citizens' standard of living, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities should also be respected, and both short and long-term needs should be taken into consideration. Climate change mitigation must be linked with the immediate need for adaptation. In that regard, the Commission on Climate Change and Development focused on adaptation to the impact of climate change, including disaster risk reduction.

74. The lack of a coherent and coordinated response to climate change on the part of donor countries was worrying. Donors should act in a coordinated and harmonized manner in order to ensure that the assistance they offered was in keeping with the national priorities of the recipient countries. Donors could only overcome the trust deficit between poor and rich countries if they honoured their previous commitments and maintained an open dialogue based on equality between donor and recipient.

75. **Mr. Khalilzad** (United States of America) said that, too often, international efforts did not go beyond the requirements of humanitarian assistance and fell short of achieving real economic development. Sustainable development posed significant technical, policy and institutional challenges to Member States.

76. The worldwide rise in food prices was one of those challenges. For some, that rise had meant the difference between eating and not eating at all. As a leader in the international effort to secure the food supply of the most vulnerable countries and populations, the United States Government had announced nearly $1 billion in additional support since the beginning of 2008 aimed at mitigating the effects of high food prices on the most vulnerable and addressing the underlying cause of the crisis.

77. The successful conclusion of the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations would reduce the volatility of agricultural markets by reducing tariffs and other barriers to agricultural trade, eliminating export subsidies and reducing the effect of domestic subsidies on the ability of the agricultural sector to respond promptly to price signals.

78. Another challenge was achieving sustainable economic growth. Broad-based economic growth was the only means by which countries could generate the resources they needed to improve health, increase literacy and overcome other fundamental obstacles to their development, thereby ending their dependence on foreign aid. To that end, the United States had committed nearly $20 billion since 2003 to fighting HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other diseases. Education could also help break the cycle of poverty by giving people the skills they needed to be more productive and gain access to jobs.

79. For its part, the United Nations needed to strengthen the capacity of impoverished nations to deliver services and programmes to their peoples. Indeed, the key task for the Council was to identify nations that had achieved sustainable development and to impart the experiences of those countries to others so they might be able to adapt them to their own situations.

80. Yet another development challenge was building and strengthening partnerships to address climate change. Doing so required Member States to collaborate on research, establish partnerships with industry on energy efficiency and clean energy, and cooperate to finance mitigation and adaptation measures. Any future approach to addressing climate change should include meaningful participation from all major economies. Even if all developed nations

were to cut their emissions to zero, the world would not be able to successfully respond to climate change unless developing countries also cut their emissions. His country endorsed the principle of common but differentiated approaches that had been underscored in the Bali Road Map. While all Member States had a common responsibility to address climate change, each State should act based on its capacities and capabilities.

81. **Ms. Espinosa** (Observer for Ecuador) said that Member States were confronted with a number of global crises that affected developing countries in particular and that presented a major obstacle to efforts aimed at eradicating poverty. The effects of climate change and the international energy, food and financial crises meant that most developing countries would not be able to achieve internationally agreed goals in respect of both sustainable development and the MDGs.

82. The effect of climate change and the lack of a response from developed countries, particularly in light of their historic responsibility for greenhouse gas emissions, had seriously threatened the environmental aspect of sustainable development. In that connection, Ecuador, conscious of its shared but differentiated responsibility, had recently proposed, under the Yasuní-Ishpingo Tambococha Tiputini (ITT) initiative, that it would not extract 920 million barrels of oil in order to prevent the release of 100 million tons of carbon emissions, at a cost of nearly $18 billion in lost revenue over the next 25 years. In return, the international community should compensate his country for the environmental benefits that would accrue from its sacrifice.

83. International agricultural policies needed to be reassessed with a view to ending the serious food crisis facing the world, which demonstrated the inadequacy and injustice of the world food market. The right to food security should not be subject to private interests or to the shortcomings of trade and macroeconomic policies. Furthermore, developed nations should eliminate their agricultural subsidies and allow free access to their markets for agricultural goods from developing countries. The Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations should be concluded in a manner that promoted the sustainable development of all countries.

84. Sustainable development could only be achieved through appropriate, consistent and unconditional international cooperation. In that connection, her delegation called on developed countries to fulfil their commitment to allocate 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product to ODA and urged international financial institutions to strongly support the efforts of developing countries to meet internationally agreed commitments, including through South-South and triangular cooperation.

85. **Mr. Hannesson** (Iceland) said that, in view of the multiple challenges facing Member States in their quest for sustainable development, such as climate change and the global food crisis, and with the deadline for the achievement of the MDGs looming, it was vital that the first Development Cooperation Forum should be successful.

86. High food prices were a matter of life and death in some countries, and it was women, in particular mothers, who bore the brunt as they struggled to feed their families. The current food production and distribution systems could not cope with the massive increase in demand and the added stress from climate change. It was crucial to increase agricultural productivity and find sustainable solutions to the problem of food security, since the markets alone could not resolve the crisis.

87. Gender equality and the role of women in agriculture were significant factors in fighting the food crisis. With a view to strengthening local food security, his country had cooperated with partner countries to promote the active participation of women in the economy; it had also increased its support for the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

88. Sustainable fisheries were also important to resolving the food crisis. Given that 95 per cent of those who earned a living from fisheries came from developing nations, it was more important than ever to ensure that fishing was conducted in a sustainable manner.

89. Climate change and high energy prices also required urgent action. Many oil-importing developing countries were suffering because their economies were dependent on oil and they urgently needed to transform their energy systems. Iceland had successfully transformed itself from being primarily a fossil-fuel user into a world leader in the production and

consumption of clean energy and it stood ready to share its experiences in that regard with other nations.

90. **Mr. Mansour** (Observer for Tunisia) said that the food and energy crises had demonstrated the vulnerability of the international system and seriously threatened to undermine development gains. The High-Level Conference on World Food Security had also highlighted the linkages between the food supply, energy and climate change.

91. While his delegation supported the calls for investment in the agricultural sector, that could, inter alia, reduce rural poverty, boost agricultural production and food security, such a strategy required substantial financing and predictable markets, both of which were currently lacking. Other options should also be explored, such as of emergency responses in the provision of agricultural inputs to countries with food deficits and the provision of financial assistance to net food-importing countries in order to ease the budget deficits they had incurred because of soaring food prices.

92. In that connection, a number of innovative financing options had been proposed to address the food crisis, including the appeal by the President of Tunisia to all oil-rich countries to contribute one dollar from every barrel of oil sold to the World Solidarity Fund. That appeal was an act of faith aimed at bringing about a world of solidarity and security and should not be ignored.

93. **Ms. Krishna** (Convention on Biological Diversity) said that the priority challenges facing the United Nations — natural disasters, climate change, the food crisis and the surge in fuel prices — were directly related to the current, unprecedented loss of biodiversity. Recognizing the seriousness of the problem, the leaders at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg had agreed to substantially reduce the loss of biodiversity by 2010 and, at the initiative of the Secretary-General, that target had been integrated in Goal 7 of the MDGs.

94. To commemorate the International Year of Biodiversity (2010), the participants at the Ninth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity had called for a special high-level event on the eve of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly. That would be preceded by a number of events, including a summit on women and biodiversity, which the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity hoped would be integrated into United Nations processes. To help commemorate the International Year of Biodiversity, the Economic and Social Council, which played a key role in bringing value added to the work of functional commissions such as the Commission on Sustainable Development, should hold a special event on a theme such as biodiversity for development and achievement of the MDGs both during the annual ministerial review and during the Development Cooperation Forum.

95. **Mr. Bautista** (Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CONGO)) said that the achievement of sustainable development went hand in hand with the realization of human rights, including the right to food. He stressed the importance of food sovereignty in mitigating the effects of a deepening global food crisis and called on the donor community and recipient countries to recognize the link between gender equality, human rights and environmental stability. Mere words would not feed the hungry, mitigate climate change or lower the cost of energy. It was therefore time for governments and civil society to join forces and put their words into action.

96. **Mr. Irandoust** (Asian Institute of Technology (AIT)) said that the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) had been founded by the member States of the South-East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) to promote technological and socio-economic development in the Asian region through higher learning and capacity-building programmes. AIT had contributed significantly to the sustainable development of many Asian nations and hoped to extend its activities to the continent of Africa. The Institute welcomed the support it had received from the Secretary-General and various United Nations agencies in setting up the ASEAN Regional Centre of Excellence on the Millennium Development Goals. The Centre planned to develop educational materials and train trainers for governments, academic institutions, civil society, NGOs and the private sector. The initial focus would be on Goals 1, 3, 7 and 8, namely poverty eradication, gender equality, environmental sustainability and global partnership for development.

97. **Mr. Viard** (Mouvement international ATD Quart Monde) said that, despite some progress in poverty reduction, the gap between the poorest and the richest had continued to widen. In fact, between 1990 and 2004, the share of national consumption by the poorest

fifth of the population in developing countries had decreased from 4.6 to 3.9 per cent. People living in extreme poverty were the most economically vulnerable and the least prepared to respond to natural disasters.

98. To avoid perpetuating a system of exclusion, sustainable development policies must take into account all persons living in poverty, not only those living just below the poverty line. ATD Quart Monde urged the entities of the United Nations system to give priority to the elimination of extreme poverty in order to enable the poorest to actually participate in development and implementation of policies. A participatory approach would not only ensure progress towards achieving the MDGs but would also promote a more multidimensional view of the fight against poverty — a view based on human rights and responsibilities.

99. **Ms. Loreto** (Ius Primi Viri International Association) said that a new form of education was needed so that children would learn to respect life, human dignity and the laws of social development. "Education for sustainable development" was an educational approach that sought to balance social and economic well-being with cultural traditions and a respect for the earth's natural resources. The first step in implementing sustainable development through education was to train educators so that they could teach children how to address serious ecological disasters and deal with the psychosocial deterioration that would inevitably lead to the destruction of mankind. Based on 30 years of research, Ius Primi Viri had developed an educational methodology that enabled individuals to develop a greater awareness of themselves. That awareness would help generate greater respect for both human rights and the environment.

100. **Ms. Ansha-Eshom** (Netright World Network/ Africa) said that development meant an improved standard of living and access to information, education, health and justice. Development must translate into a system that enabled people to use age-tested indigenous knowledge; allowed children to remain in the area where they had been born instead of migrating to the Sahara to die; did not create generational gaps that caused indigenous wisdom to be lost; and built technology around indigenous knowledge to improve quality of life. Effective sustainable development must be people-centred and must focus on local capacity-building.

The meeting rose at 7.10 p.m.